

The Essence of a Christian in Henri de Lubac: Sacramental Ontology or Non-Ontology

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Introduction

Henri de Lubac has made major contributions to both the discourse on nature and grace as well as to ecclesiology. His testimony to the Church as the mystical Body of Christ has however not remained without criticism. In this essay, I will question McPartlan's reproach that de Lubac's ecclesiology implicitly propagates individualism.¹ Explicitly, de Lubac fights against individualism, because he conceives of it as intrinsically opposed to Christianity.² This explains partly why all his theology centres on the theme of unity.³ Thus, de Lubac's 'Catholicism' witnesses to the Church Fathers' conception of the whole of humanity as a single being.⁴ The natural principle of the unity of humankind is that we are all made in God's image⁵; the ecclesiological principle of unity is that we are all saved through Christ's death on the Cross.⁶

McPartlan interprets this unity hence as one consisting in what we all have in common, and not in our individual relationships to one another.⁷ The Church, according to de Lubac, would be the coincidental assemblage of all those who share in God's image and Christ's sacrifice. According to McPartlan's criticism, the importance of personhood and otherness of the members is thus diminished,⁸

¹ Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes The Church: Henry de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), p.67.

² *Ibid.*, p.14.

³ Aidan Nichols, 'Henri de Lubac: Panorama and Proposal', *New Blackfriars* 93 (2012), p.3.

⁴ Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism* (London: Burns & Oats, Universe Books edition, 1962), pp.1–2, cit. by McPartlan, p.15.

⁵ De Lubac, *Catholicism*, pp.2–3, cit. by McPartlan, p.15.

⁶ McPartlan, p.16.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.19.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.67.

because the only question one had to pose oneself would be whether one bears the image of Christ in oneself; that one is not the only individual who asks this would be considered as mere coincidence and not as of substantial importance.

The two crucial issues in this criticism are what it means to be inhabited by Christ and the differentiation between substance and accidents. For, McPartlan seems to intrinsically privilege substance over accidents and thus presupposes that the former can be separated from the latter with regards to salvation. I will claim in this essay that, in de Lubac's existential approach, the fact that all members of the Church are united through their sharing in Christ's sacrifice does not focus on their identical substance in such a way that their differing accidents are diminished.⁹

First, de Lubac's understanding of God will have to be examined, with a particular focus on how God differs from all created substances and accidents. A discussion on sacramental ontology will provide the key to the metaphysics of creaturehood. The next chapter will focus on the status of human beings as distinct from the rest of creation through their direct participation in God's creative activity. This leads to a consideration of the difference between sacramental ontology and 'non-ontology'. A preference for the latter shall highlight one of the main problems of McPartlan's criticism. A brief discussion of the Incarnation being mainly a revelation of personhood will finally show how the substantial sharing in God's image does not diminish the importance of individual accidents and therefore not privilege identity over otherness of the Church members.

God and Creation

According to de Lubac, God is known as the ultimate ground of being.¹⁰ Nothing that comes from God can be a mere thing, but everything created inevitably participates in God's Being and thus ultimately reveals God.¹¹ Everything is always more than it naturally displays on first sight, because being full of potentials any materialised object bears within it all that which it is not. The primary

⁹ The metaphysical analysis of the correlation between substances and accidents in this essay will mainly draw on an argumentation by Catherine Pickstock, 'Thomas Aquinas and the quest for the Eucharist', in John Milbank and Simon Oliver, ed., *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp.265–284.

¹⁰ Rudolf Vorderholzer, *Meet Henri de Lubac, His Life and Work*, trans. by Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), pp.142–143.

¹¹ Henri de Lubac, *The Discovery of God*, trans. by Alexander Dru (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), p.87.

revelation through anything created is therefore *that* it is, and only secondarily comes *what* precisely it is. The universe is not only God's work, but also His creature.¹² This means that although the world is created and God is uncreated, both are not separated, but the world's createdness constantly relies on God's uncreatedness. 'The universe lives and exists only in God'.¹³ God's transcendence is thus the exact opposite of absence; He is present in everything in such a way that '[e]very creature reveals him by virtue of the being that it borrows from him, crying out that it is not he'.¹⁴

If one regards the substance of God as pure Being, the command to love each other for the image of God within herself could be translated into loving in each human being merely that she exists as compared to the option of her non-existence. However, it has to be noted that the above has focused on the relation between God and His creation in general, and not on the status of human beings in particular. Nevertheless, a further analysis of the general state of all creation has to clarify the correlation between substance and accidents, which will, in the course of this essay, also shed light on the particular situation of human beings.

Sacramental ontology

Because of de Lubac's stress on God's underlying Being in all creation, Hans Boersma labels his program a 'sacramental ontology'.¹⁵ According to Boersma, de Lubac's focus is on the sacramental presence of the supernatural in the natural world.¹⁶ The whole of nature is symbolic in so far as it intrinsically points to the supernatural, and in this way, makes the supernatural present in the natural realm.¹⁷ The historic reality, in exactly the way it presents itself to us, serves as sacramental means enabling us to enter into union with God.¹⁸ Catherine Pickstock's metaphysical analysis of the Eucharist will clarify how the material (or natural) reality of sacraments is permeated by the supernatural.

In the Eucharist, bread and wine are materially and the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are spiritually present. Bread and wine are thus the natural signs for the supernatural reality of Body and Blood.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.92.

¹⁵ Hans Boersma, 'Nature and the Supernatural in *la nouvelle théologie*: The recovery of a sacramental mindset', *New Blackfriars* 93 (2011), pp.34–46.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.34.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.35.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.38.

The transubstantiation is hence no sceptical denial of the apparent presence of bread and wine, because they remain the real accidents of the underlying substance of Body and Blood.¹⁹ For Pickstock, this exemplifies the more general fact that God is substantially present in the world through ‘sensory phenomena’, through accidents that are not God.²⁰ The Eucharist allows us to experience everything in the world as ‘possible vehicle of the divine’.²¹ De Lubac’s sacramental ontology thus re-asserts the significance of the created order even in supernatural issues.²² Sacraments do not function as intermediaries, which would be something in between nature and the supernatural. But, they are indeed mediatory, which means that they really are the immanent and sensible bonds to the supernatural. Thus, they really unite the transcendent and the historic reality here on earth.²³ However, this analysis showed primarily the connection of the natural and the supernatural in sacraments, and Pickstock’s further explanations will aid to clarify how sacraments are distinct from all other creatures.

The specificity of substances and accidents in creatures

Normally, bread and wine are substantially and accidentally bread and wine, but in the Eucharist, they are reduced to be only accidentally bread and wine because of their transubstantiation into Body and Blood.²⁴ The possibility that accidents persist without their naturally corresponding underlying substance reveals something about creaturehood in general.²⁵ It shows that accidents derive their existence not from their underlying substance, but that they have another foundation by which they are enabled to exist.²⁶ There is thus a real distinction between essence and existence, which is ontologically deeper than the distinction between substance and accidents.²⁷ This means that all creatures participate directly in Being, which means that God creates them and they are.

However, being created means that there is a materialisation of being contrasting God’s Being, who simply is without any *specific*

¹⁹ Pickstock, pp.270–271.

²⁰ Ibid., p.271.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Hans Boersma, ‘Sacramental Ontology: Nature and the Supernatural in the Ecclesiology of Henri de Lubac’, in *New Blackfriars* 88 (2007), p.273.

²³ Ibid, p.264.

²⁴ Pickstock, p.279.

²⁵ Ibid., p.280.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

substance or accidents. The bread and wine in the Eucharist are created accidents and at the same time the uncreated substance of God Himself. This shows that the substance of God is other than any other substance because it has no definite corresponding accidents, it is not limited to any specific materialisation, but it is the ground for all materialisations. The accidents no longer serve to mediate a created substance, but they merely mediate the Divine. Creation could hence be regarded as distinguished in a spiritual realm of substances and a material realm of accidents. Substances are the spiritualisation and accidents are the materialisation of being. Therefore, substance and accidents are much more united in their otherness from pure Being than they are separated through their material presence or absence in the natural world. It is the real distinction between essence and existence, which is at the fundament of all creation; either something participates in Being and exists or something does not participate in Being and does not exist.²⁸

After this analysis of the correlation of substance and accidents in creation in general, the focus now has to be turned to how human beings inhabit both realms of creation – the natural and the supernatural – in a unique manner.

Human Beings and Creation

The openness of human nature to the supernatural

De Lubac recognises a ‘twofold gift’ from God to human beings: nature and grace, which are clearly distinguished.²⁹ He draws on Augustine for whom there is ‘one gift to be and another gift to be holy’,³⁰ when he differentiates between a first gift of creation and a second gift of deification.³¹ The natural desire for deification, which comes with the first gift, is the link between both gifts and indicates that the first is made for the second.³² In Milbank’s words human beings are composed of a created nature and a created spirit.³³ The latter is free and flexible and constitutes therefore the part in human nature, which reflects the image of God.³⁴ However, paradoxically, human nature is unable to reach its supernatural end

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Nicholas J. Healy, ‘Henri de Lubac on Nature and Grace: A Note on Some Recent Contributions’, *Communio* 35 (2008), p.540.

³⁰ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, V.15., cit. by. Healy, p.540.

³¹ Healy, p.540.

³² Ibid., p.541.

³³ John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural* (London: SCM Press, 2005), p.82.

³⁴ Ibid.

on its own strength. De Lubac does not regard this as any shortcoming, but as the 'created infrastructure which opens nature from within to receive and participate in the new and unimagined gift of deification'.³⁵

This paradox shows that human beings have 'a certain capacity for the infinite',³⁶ which reveals that our destiny is not bound to this world but intrinsically surpasses it. Human nature in its wholeness is not contained in the cosmic and empirical reality,³⁷ but is free from it.³⁸ Hence, that the ultimate end of human beings is anticipated with nature, but cannot be reached on account of the selfsame, shows both God's freedom and the mobility of the human spirit.³⁹ Whereas other creatures are entirely subject to the natural laws, human beings are able to have a real impact on their surroundings, for they possess the power to create.⁴⁰ 'Every thought absorbs [...] the universality of facts, sets itself free of them, replaces them by its own creation, and is itself, knows itself, develops itself only as it lives that transcendence'.⁴¹

This means that first it is spiritually that humankind is not bound to nature, for we are able to imagine the world other than we perceive it with our senses. We get beyond the universe, surpass 'the brute facts'.⁴² But, being not merely spiritual, but also material, these thoughts will have some sort of impact on the natural world. Through our actions, we materialise these thoughts and thus return from the supernatural into the natural sphere and hence transform nature. One could perceive thus of the relation between substances and accidents no longer as a linear predestination of the accidents by their substances, but rather as a movement of circular influences on each other. This puts humankind in a yet undefined position in between the material and the spiritual world, or in between nature and the supernatural. Maurice Blondel's⁴³ theory of action provides the necessary link between the human as a material and the human as a spiritual being and will therefore help to clarify our position in the world.

³⁵ Healy, p.561.

³⁶ Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. by Rosemary Sheed (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967), p.110.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p.109.

³⁹ Healy, p.543.

⁴⁰ De Lubac, *Mystery of the Supernatural*, p.109.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Blondel had probably more impact on de Lubac than anyone else (Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.53).

Revelation of the supernatural through human action

Blondel draws a distinction between what a human being wills and what this will really achieves.⁴⁴ The former is a spiritual activity, which is informed by the material surroundings of the respective human being, and Blondel names this activity the ‘willing will’.⁴⁵ The latter is the material outcome of the action which has been taken in order to satisfy the willing will. Blondel calls this materialisation the ‘willed will’.⁴⁶ It is the action, which establishes the discrepancy between willing will and willed will.⁴⁷ Human action is ‘the bond between thought and being’.⁴⁸ That our action led to a material outcome which is different from what we originally willed, reveals that the natural and the supernatural sphere are influenced by, but are, at the same time, to a certain degree free from each other.⁴⁹

Situated in the material world, the line of action we choose, in order to attain what we will, follows human calculations based on the natural law and former experiences. We think that the latter predict the outcome of our action in such a way that what we first willed in our imagination will be realised in the material world. However, what we really produce is sometimes different from and always more than what we originally intended. We are only able to explain the naturally predictable aspects of it, but its concrete fullness contains elements which do not follow strictly the natural law and have therefore been brought about supernaturally.⁵⁰ This explains mainly the influence which supernatural substances have on natural accidents. A further consultation of Pickstock’s analysis of the Eucharist will examine how substances are equally influenced by action and how sacraments interrupt the whole circular movement between nature and the supernatural.

Definition of the natural through action

Blondel’s theory of action can aid to clarify why the immediate subsistence of the Eucharistic accidents of bread and wine in Being, without reliance on their mediatory substance of bread and wine in

⁴⁴ Michael A. Conway, ‘Maurice Blondel and *Ressourcement*’, in Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, ed., *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.67.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.68.

⁴⁸ Robert C. Koerpel, ‘Blondel’s *L’Action*: The Liturgy Between Two Worlds’, in *The Heythrop Journal* 52 (2011), p.431.

⁴⁹ Conway, p.68.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.68.

the spiritual realm, renders them more themselves than they have been before.⁵¹ Normally, to conceive of something as substantially bread and wine means that we spiritually classify the perceived accidents under the category of food. However, to know that it really is food, and indeed bread and wine, we have to act, which means that we have to eat it.⁵² Bread and wine that exist as potential food are only realised as food if we eat it, because there is a surplus of potentialities in the accidents of bread and wine which forbids us to draw a rationally predictable conclusion from bread and wine to food. Bread and wine could for example also be used as objects of art in a museum and thus never nourish anyone.

It is thus our action, what we do with the accidents of bread and wine, which does make it into what it spiritually is, either food or piece of art. But, in the Eucharist, bread and wine always are the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and thus, they always really are food, disregarding what we do with it.⁵³ This is because created substance is by definition limited. Something created can always be either one thing or another. However, God who is uncreated Being is prior to all distinctions, and thus being mediated through the bread and wine in the Eucharist is always present in the bread and wine, disregarding any other use we assign to it. The Eucharist is thus the primordial demonstration for de Lubac's conviction that '[i]f God is transcendent, then nothing is opposed to him, nothing can limit him nor be compared with him: he is "wholly other", and therefore penetrates the world absolutely'.⁵⁴

Divine revelation through human creation

However, all other creatures, apart from sacraments, consist of material accidents and spiritual substances, which are both created realities. The concept of sacramental ontology could allude that we perceive the supernatural directly through the given natural. The previous examination has however demonstrated that it is only in sacraments that God reveals Himself directly through natural accidents. Normally, we primarily see in natural accidents substances which are supernatural but at the same time not God. Considering more the Blondelian influence on de Lubac, Milbank proposes the term 'non-ontology'⁵⁵ instead of sacramental ontology. The term of non-ontology is chosen because the real with which we deal is precisely

⁵¹ Pickstock, p.280.

⁵² Ibid., p.281.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ De Lubac, *Discovery of God*, p.94.

⁵⁵ Milbank, p.78.

that which paradoxically points beyond itself. In created objects, contrary to sacraments, God reveals Himself not through the given in its materialised form, but only through the given in connection with all its prior potentialities that have not been materialised. It is action, which constitutes the ‘synthesis between man and God’⁵⁶ and not any material object per se. ‘[T]he natural is always elevated but not destroyed. Yet [...] the “more” that is demanded by nature can only be received from God as a gift’.⁵⁷

The distinction between nature and the supernatural as two gifts is crucial for de Lubac’s ontology. The world is given to humankind in created objects, which means that we first perceive creation through its materialised accidents. This is what de Lubac calls the ‘gift of the sign’.⁵⁸ But God bestowed human nature with a second gift, which is to interpret the signs.⁵⁹ We have the spiritual ability to legitimately construct substances, and to thereby also create new materialisations. We thus create in imitation of God and inhabit the supernatural realm as human beings. This implies that what we first perceive in nature is the supernatural in form of spiritualised substances which are our own creations. Nature thus does not serve to reveal God directly but it first reveals our ability to create and it is the latter which directly reveals God. God reveals Himself to us through creation as an act and not as a thing. At this point it can already be noted that to be united as humankind through our bearing of God’s image within each one of us constitutes less a unity of what we all are and more a unity of what we all do. We are hence united by sharing the same ability, which inevitably leads into otherness. That the term non-ontology is to be preferred over sacramental ontology has to do with the fact that as human beings we are positioned in between God and His creation, which forbids us to perceive Him directly through nature because of our fallen state, as will be highlighted in the following.

The limitations of human creation

It is crucial that human nature as we possess it is fallen and not as it had designed to be.⁶⁰ What creation shares with God is *that* it is, but what distinguishes it from God as creation is *what* it is. Hence,

⁵⁶ Maurice Blondel, *L’Action (1893): Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice*, trans. by Oliva Blanchette (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p.343, cit. by Koerpel, p.435.

⁵⁷ Milbank, p.79.

⁵⁸ De Lubac, *Discovery of God*, p.90.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Henri de Lubac, *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1984), pp.117–122, cit. by McPartlan, p.62.

one could interpret it is a consequence of the human Fall that our focus primarily lies on what something is, spiritually and materially. Thus, 'the deepest desire of nature is precisely the renunciation of anything like a claim or a demand in the first place; it is a holding-onself-in-readiness so that God may be God'.⁶¹ The substances and accidents which we create always fall short of what we really desire, because we are bound to limit their potentialities in an either/or fashion. If substances and accidents are regarded to be limited as a consequence of the human Fall, our own substance and accidents as human beings would have to be interpreted as constantly limiting themselves as well. Fallen human beings bind themselves to creation rather than to pure Being. This indicates already that to consist of a substance and accidents is as such not the problem of human nature, but it is what we make of them which has to be dissolved by deification, as will be further clarified by the example of the Incarnation.

The Christian ontology of personhood

It is in Jesus Christ that human and divine nature ultimately meet without destroying each other to any extent. According to Chalcedon, Christ is consubstantial with the Father through His divine nature and He shares the same substance with us through His human nature.⁶² The union between both natures is established in the Person of Christ and not in some merging together of the two natures into one.⁶³ This means that properties of the human nature which are conflicting with the Divine can coexist in Christ without resolving the paradox between them. 'The person is truly both man and God, and so the union of the two sets of properties is truly real in Him'.⁶⁴ This differs from the transubstantiation of bread and wine where bread and wine maintain their accidents but change their substance. In the Incarnation, human substance and accidents can coexist with the Divine substance in one Person.

The substantial perfection of the person Jesus Christ leads to the accidental perfection of His assumed human nature.⁶⁵ This divinisation of the human nature by sharing in the substantial perfection of God through personhood is the ultimate realisation of the original design of human nature and hence constitutes a 'transcendent

⁶¹ Healy, p.547.

⁶² Emile Mersch, S.J., *The Theology of the Mystical Body*, trans. by Cyril S.J. Vollert, S.T.D. (St Louis/ London: B. Herder Book Co., 1951), p.202.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.203.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.206.

“humanization”.’⁶⁶ It thus intrinsically belongs to human nature to consist of a substance and accidents. Although fallen human beings mistake these substances and accidents as limitations to pure Being, and hence establish themselves as creatures, it is through personhood that the fundamental openness of human substance and accidents can be maintained. This reflects the concept of non-ontology, which puts a constant ‘coming to be’ as the most fundamental reality.

Personhood could be interpreted as the merging of human substance and accidents in a way which creates itself ever anew through action and can never be fixed. In accord with Blondel’s action theory, Emile Mersch points out that God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ is not a system of concepts or any abstract philosophy in the spiritual sphere, but it is by living His life that Christ showed to humankind what it is to be the child of God and a divinised human being.⁶⁷ On this basis, de Lubac’s thesis that the substantial indwelling of Christ in each Christian makes the Church can finally be understood.

The implicit relational character of the Church

De Lubac claims that every Christian experiences the mystery of the Incarnation in her own life.⁶⁸ The knowledge of what it is to be a person is hence not transmitted as an abstract theory but through experience. Hence, if the Incarnation is re-enacted in every individual soul, it follows that it is also through the living of our lives that we know what it means to be a Christian. De Lubac underlines that the way in which human beings know God is not that of a subject knowing an object, but we know God through a relationship between two subjects.⁶⁹ ‘The further one gets from the *He*, the more vividly one realizes the *Thou* – and through the *Thou* its necessary correlative, the I. [. . .] Reflection, far from dissolving or annihilating personal being, gives it a foundation’.⁷⁰

In terms of the theory of action, this could be interpreted as the spiritual engagement with the substance of the doctrine of God. The doctrine presents God as a ‘He’ to the mind, but once we begin to put for example the doctrinal belief of God as Father into action, we do not only talk about Him as Father anymore, but we address God as Father. Our action reveals to us that God is no object but a subject. It is thus through the existential engagement with Christian doctrine

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.205.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.55.

⁶⁸ Henri de Lubac, ‘Mystique et Mystère’, in the collection *Théologies d’occasion* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1984), pp.64–65, cit. by McPartlan, p.54.

⁶⁹ De Lubac, *Discovery of God*, p.99.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

that we can know 'that our God is a personal God', that 'being has the countenance of a person'.⁷¹

Now, if human beings bear the image of God and Christians share the same indwelling Christ this implicitly entails the relational character of the Church and cannot be separated from it, as criticised by McPartlan. Although we are united through a substantial sameness this sameness is no object but it is a principle of action. This resonates with Aidan Nichols' finding that '[f]or de Lubac, a person is not just an atomic individual but a 'universe' which 'supposes others likewise''.⁷² Thus, the Catholic communion has to be of 'personalist' character.⁷³ Also, that the Church as a whole is the 'sacrament of Christ'⁷⁴ suggests that it is precisely through the accidents of the Church, which means every single Christian in their individuality and otherness, that God is present in the world.

Conclusion

It has been shown that McPartlan's criticism on de Lubac's ecclesiology to be of individualist character has mainly been misled by the assumption that as human beings we bear the image of God as an objectified substance within us. This places the substance of God on the same level as all other substances in the spiritual realm of creation. The term 'sacramental ontology' could nurture this misconception by suggesting that human beings are natural objects through which we can perceive a supernatural object which is God. However, the term 'non-ontology' captures better de Lubac's theological program by laying the emphasis on the real as the creative activity which constantly reveals the supernatural through nature in an ever renewing movement. That humankind is united through their substantial sharing in God's image does not mean that we are on some fixed level all the same, but it implies that we all have the same ability to create. That this unity does not diminish our human accidents for the sake of this shared substance has been revealed through Jesus Christ, in whom the human nature has not been corrupted by the Divine, but both coexist in one Person. Personhood indicates that the relation between substance and accidents is such that it can never be fixed as both constantly reveal themselves ever anew through the particular life of the person. That Christ indwells each member of the Church hence forbids us to focus either on our sameness or on our otherness.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.102.

⁷² Henri de Lubac, *Catholicisme. Les aspects sociaux du Dogme* (Paris: Cerf, 1938), p.259, cit. by Nichols, p.18.

⁷³ Nichols, p.19.

⁷⁴ De Lubac, *Catholicism*, p.28, cit. by McPartlan, p.22.

The focus has to be on that which we constantly become. And, since the indwelling Christ in each member of the Church, with their particular created substances and accidents, leads to different actions it is only the sum of all these actions which builds up together the Body of Christ. We cannot know Christ through only our own actions, but rely on the actions of the whole Church. As Christ is not indwelling in us as an object but as a subject we have to relate ourselves to Him constantly and since the Church is the living Body of Christ we also have to relate ourselves to the Church, which can be realised only through action towards Her members. Thus, the relational character of the Church is implicitly contained in the claim that all Her members are united by the same indwelling Christ.

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